DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 178 822 CG 013 935

AUTHOR Manthei, R. J.; Small, J. J.
TITLE Practicum Training for School Counsellors.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 9p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Counselors; *Counselor Training; *Evaluation Methods; Foreign Countries; Guidance Personnel; Interviews; *Microcounseling; *Practicums; *Skill Development; *Training Objectives; Training Techniques
IDENTIFIERS *New Zealand (Christchurch)

ABSTRACT

This report describes how theoretical principles and counseling skills are taught in a program for training school counselors. The model used resembles others in assuming that three main phases can be discerned in most counseling relationships: a beginning phase, a developing phase and an action phase. Within each phase, specific skills are identified, explained and practiced in a micro-counseling format. The practicum is designed to enable counselors to develop competence and confidence in working with students, teachers, parents and referral service staff. Training in counseling skills is offered through role-playing, simulations, and structured exercises. Audio- and video-tape equipment is used for demonstrations, supervision and counselor self-analysis. Also, each counselor works one day per week in a local secondary school under the guidance of that school's counselor. This skills-based practicum is only part of the whole program. Formal assessment of this model has yet to be carried out. Although the model is geographically specific, it can be adapted for counselor training programs elsewhere. (Author/BMW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

- ED178822

PRACTICUM TRAINING FOR SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

by

R. J. Manthei and J. J. Small

R. J. Manthei - Lecturer in Education, University of Canterbury,

Christchurch New Zealand.

J. J. Small - Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Canterbury,

Christchurch, New Zealand.

CG013935

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R.J. Manthei

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PRACTICUM TRAINING FOR SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

Most programs for training counsellors require students to both understand theoretical principles and to demonstrate competence in actual counselling situations. The purpose of the supervised practicum is to help counsellors translate these principles and skills into practice in ways that are effective. This report describes how these principles and skills are taught in a New Zealand program for training school counsellors.

The model that is used resembles others in assuming that three main stages or phases can be discerned in most counselling relationships: a beginning phase, a developing phase, and an action phase. Within each of these phases a number of separate skills are identified, explained and practised in a micro-counselling format. Since the inception of the program in 1973, the model has been modified and extended and will appear in complete form in a book (Munro, Manthei and Small, 1979).

The Practicum

The practicum is designed to enable counsellors to develop competence and confidence in working with students, teaching staff, parents, and people in referral services. It is thought desirable to introduce direct experience of counselling into the practicum as early as possible.

Twelve counsellors enter the program each year, which runs from February through mid-November. In addition to studies of adolescence, measurement, vocational guidance, educational guidance, and behaviour analysis, all counsellors are enrolled in counselling,

which consists of two hours per week of theory and four hours per week of practicum. Two of these four hours are taken up with a training group experience. The organization of the other two hours of practicum is to be described in detail.

Extensive and intensive training in counselling skills is given through role-playing, simulations, and structured exercises. Audio and video-tape equipment is used in demonstrations, supervision, and counsellor self-analysis. In addition, each counsellor works one day per week in a local secondary school under the guidance and supervision of that school's counsellor.

Beginning in the second term (i.e., after about 9 weeks) each counsellor is expected to begin video-taping actual interviews with students from their placement schools. In making arrangements for recordings, the following guidelines are observed:

a. Video-taping interviews with students must first be discussed with the school's counsellor.

b. Only volunteer students are used.

c. Students are invited to discuss any topic that is of present concern to them (preferably real rather than imagined).

d. The purpose of recording the interview and the use to be made of it is fully explained to the students, i.e., for educational and training purposes with counsellors only.

e. Although each interview is arranged on a "once only" basis, if the volunteer desires further help, follow-up contact will be arranged within the school's guidance service.

f. Students have the option at any time during or after the interview to have the recording erased.

Each counsellor makes at least three such recordings. The first recording is viewed and discussed with a course supervisor before a second is made. Although the first tape is not assessed, specific suggestions and comments are given as guidelines for improvement in the second recorded interview. The second, third, and if necessary, additional recordings are assessed as either acceptable or unacceptable. Each counsellor must have two interviews rated as acceptable, each by a different supervisor. Thus, the minimum number of video-taped recordings per counsellor is three, while the maximum depends on each counsellor's effectiveness.

Immediately following each recording session, both the counsellor and the volunteer student complete interview evaluation forms which are kept by the counsellor and discussed with the supervisor when the recording is evaluated. In addition, a supervisor records a short, evaluation interview with the volunteer student. The student is asked to comment on the general value of the session and also on specific counsellor behaviours that were found to be either helpful or unhelpful.

Thus, for each supervision session four kinds of information are available for discussion: (a) the actual video-tape recording of the interview, (b) the volunteer student's written evaluation of the session, (c) the counsellor's written evaluation of the session, and (d) the supervisor's recorded interview with the student.

A further exercise is required as a means of assessing the counsellor's understanding of specific counselling skills and their ability to critically analyze their own counselling interactions. Each counsellor chooses one acceptable recording and submits the following for evaluation:

(a) Along with the video-tape and the counsellor and student evaluation forms, each counsellor submits a verbatim transcript of two sets of 15 consecutive counsellor-client interactions. Counsellors are asked to select those portions of their tapes in which critical incidents occurred.

(b) A written, critical appraisal of the two sets of interactions is also submitted. Counsellors are asked to identify the specific counselling skills used and to study their contexts, commenting on the appropriateness and effectiveness of each skill. Finally, they are asked to make some overall assessment of their performance.

Like the video-tapes, this written critique is assessed as either acceptable or unacceptable. If the latter assessment is made, the work is resubmitted until it is assessed as acceptable.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A number of other points deserve mentioning. In recording their interviews counsellors are encouraged to use a variety of clients, e.g., students of various ages and either sex, first-time and on-going clients, teachers, parents, etc. This ensures that counsellors will have variety and depth in their practical experiences.

Counsellors are urged to limit the recorded interviews to 20-30 minutes. While this is not rigidly adhered to, it helps to avoid

their feeling that each interview must be a perfect, though condensed, representation of the entire counselling process. This, too, is explained fully to volunteers before any recording takes place.

Following taping, each volunteer is invited to view the tape. All questions regarding its use or contents are answered. If the volunteer wants any portion of the tape erased, this is done immediately in the student's presence. Volunteers do not have to give reasons for wanting this done; nor are they questioned about it.

In supervision, the emphasis is on the counsellor's behaviour rather than on the details of the volunteer's problem or situation. Since training involves learning to use specific counselling skills, the counsellor's performance, i.e., the effectiveness and appropriateness of the skills used, is the subject of discussion. Specific strengths and weaknesses are identified, and goals are set for improvement. The facts of individual cases are not entirely ignored, for they can help the counsellor to understand others. However, they are considered to be of secondary importance in the supervision session.

This counselling practicum provides each counsellor with at least three individual supervision sessions with a staff member. Subjective reports from counsellors indicate that these sessions are invaluable in integrating theory and practice, and in beginning to develop a personal style. For the supervisor it does much to reduce the difficulties involved in assessing counselling effectiveness, and it helps to individualize training to suit the level and needs of each counsellor.

Formal assessment of this model has not yet been carried out. However, the counsellors' overwhelmingly favorable comments support the staff's feelings that the practicum is one of the most important elements of the counsellor education program. In fact, it was the counsellors themselves who urged that the video-tapes be formally assessed and that passing the practicum should be contingent on demonstrating effectiveness in actual counselling.

It should be noted that the skills-based practicum described here constitutes only part of the whole training program. The weekly training group focusses on the personal development of the counsellors, and in supervision this topic is often discussed in reference to the use of skills.

The most satisfying aspect of this practicum is that it involves both staff and counsellors in the mutual practice and assessment of counselling.

Reference

Munro, E. A., Manthei, R. J., and Small, J. J. Counselling: a skills approach. Auckland, N.Z.: Methuen N.Z., Inc., 1979.